State of Palestine
Ministry of Health
Minister's Office

دولـــة فـلـسـطين
وزارة الصحة
مكتب الوزير

Updated Report: Thursday, 21st March 2024

167 days of the Israeli aggression against Gaza

Daily Report on the Effects of the Israeli Aggression in Palestine

Catastrophic situation in numbers; the deadliest year for Palestinians

From October 7th until March 21st, 2024

Some of the information contained in this report is as of Wednesday evening, 20th of March 2024.

The Emergency Operations Center at the Ministry of Health in Ramallah supervises the data collection process through its offices in Gaza. Numbers are updated every 24 hours. These numbers reflect confirmed statistics only but do not necessarily reflect all victims due to the fact that many victims are still missing under the rubble.

The escalating atrocities in Palestine because of Israeli occupation aggression surpass mere numerical reporting, constituting severe violations of all human rights. The health system is deliberately targeted, amounting to genocide on the Palestinian people. This insufferable situation demands immediate intervention. We call upon all international humanitarian and health organizations to urgently enter Gaza, ensuring protection for health workers, facilities, and civilians. Tangible advocacy and pressure for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the ongoing siege on Gaza is imperative to halt this humanitarian crisis.[1][2][3]

Current Situation in numbers: (Gaza)

- About 32 thousand Palestinian are martyrs killed by the Israeli Occupation in Gaza since October 7th, 2023. About 72 per cent of those are women (about 8750) and children (about 13,700). As of then, about 74,100 thousand Palestinians have been injured a large proportion of them are children. It is estimated that more than 8,100 are missing under rubble. Obtaining accurate figures about missing persons due to continues attacks and inadequate rescue missions.
- The Israeli Occupation forces once again struck Al Shifa hospital, injuring and killing patients, internally displaced individuals seeking shelter there, and medical personnel. The hospital's surgical building was burned as a result of the Israeli bombing. The ongoing impunity of the Israeli occupation permits the ongoing indiscriminate attacks on health facilities and vulnerable individuals. Urgent action is imperative to address this grave situation.

[1] https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against

[2] https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-un-experts-decry-bombing-of-hospitals-and-schools-as-crimes-against-humanity-call-for-prevention-of-genocide/

[3] https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231229-pre-01-00-en.pdf?fbclid=PAAaanjzZcW1N3X8xUa5n2vOtSmJXRZGtuX25ee7DicJ6IvDv9355FU9Nco_w_aem_Af1J7V-j8lYZ0pM_D1CQooNZ6b2lctzS9pzFrRP92oaCO9tBVKTDkMB8DYqdS1aGUDk

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- The magnitude of casualties among Palestinian civilians, including children, resulting from war-related factors such as shortages of essential medications for chronic illnesses, restricted access to healthcare, starvation, overcrowding, outbreaks of infectious diseases, and other directly war-related factors, is challenging to ascertain due to the complexity of the situation on the ground.
- At least 27 civilians including 23 children and elderly died in northern Gaza in Kamal Adwan Hospital because of dehydration and malnutrition, as a quarter of Gaza's population faces catastrophic levels of food insecurity.
- Children are facing the imminent threat of death resulting from severe starvation and malnutrition, a consequence of Israeli constraints and aggression in Gaza. Those with special needs are particularly vulnerable, such as those requiring specialized dietary supplements, children, and infants with celiac disease and or lactose intolerant, and those afflicted by various chronic conditions.
- It can take up to one month for supplies to enter Gaza, and if the Israeli authorities deny entry to reject even a single item, the entire cargo is returned to Egypt. With no official list of restricted items, MSF reports that it has consistently been denied the import of power generators, water purifiers, solar panels, and other medical equipment. According to the MSF project coordinator in Gaza: "These supplies mean the difference between life and death for many people," including thousands who suffer from chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes or epilepsy.
- The Israeli occupation telecommunication blackout is hindering residents in Gaza from accessing crucial lifesaving information, reaching out to first responders, and obstructing various forms of humanitarian response. It also poses challenges for obtaining on-the-ground reports about the situation and any atrocities occurring.
- After the Israeli occupation cut off the electricity supply and depleted fuel reserves for Gaza's sole power plant, the Gaza Strip has been without power since October 11. The communications and fuel shutdown hinders the aid community's efforts to assess Gaza's needs and respond to the growing humanitarian crisis.

Forced Displacement:

- Obtaining an accurate figure of the total number of forcibly displaced persons remains challenging as the Israeli occupation continues to forcibly displace civilians every day. It is estimated that 85% of the population in Gaza (around 1.93 million civilians) are forcibly displaced. including many who have been displaced multiple times, as families are forced to move repeatedly in search of safety. Nearly 1.4 million FDPs were registered in 155 UNRWA facilities across Gaza, of whom about one million are registered in 94 UNRWA shelters in the south. Obtaining accurate data regarding the forcibly displaced persons is challenging outside of these shelters, given difficulties in tracking FDPs staying with host families or in the streets.
- Nearly 1.5 million people are in Rafah, more than six times the population in comparison with before 7 October.
- Intense Israeli attacks is forcing thousands of Palestinians to flee further south towards Rafah, which is severely overcrowded. At the same time, population movements out of Rafah and towards Deir Al Balah and Nuseirat refugee camps in the Middle Area have been reported, following intensified airstrikes on Rafah.

Health Care Access:

- Health workers across Gaza continue to face enormous risks and challenges to save lives, as the health care system struggles to remain functional amid continued Israeli aggression, access constraints, lack of supplies, and an overwhelming patient load per health-care worker.

- As of 22 February, there are 12 partially functional hospitals in the Gaza Strip, including six in northern Gaza and six in the south, in addition to three partly functional field hospitals, according to WHO. As of 18 February, according to UNRWA, only seven out of its 23 health centers are now operational.
- Only 150 out of 325 known shelters currently have medical points with minimal capacity.
- The situation is especially critical in Rafah where the influx of forcibly displaced persons has overwhelmed available hospital bed capacities, and in northern Gaza where access by Emergency Medical Teams remains challenging.
- The UNFPA reports reveals that the Al Helal Al Emirati maternity hospital in Rafah, one of Gaza's few operational hospitals, has just five delivery beds. Despite shortages of essentials like sheets, the facility manages around an overwhelming 78 deliveries in a single night.

Acute shortage of medical supplies and health professionals at health facilities:

- There is a severe shortage of medical personnel in most health facilities and hospitals with an ever-increasing demand due to the continues Israeli occupation attacks and the public health catastrophe resulting from the attacks, forcible displacement, and restrictions policies.
- Medicine and medical supplies such as anesthesia, antibiotics, IV fluids, pain medications, insulin, blood, and blood products are in short supply. Hospitals are experiencing a decline in the functionality of electrically dependent medical equipment such as monitors, ventilators, incubators, x-ray and CT machines, lab analyzers, and anesthesia machines.

Public health catastrophe is rapidly evolving in Gaza:

- A public health catastrophe is continuing to unfold in the Gaza Strip due to using unsafe water resources, overcrowding and lack of basic hygiene needs as a result of the Israeli occupation, this requires urgent action.
- The water desalination plant in northern Gaza ceased operations in October 2023, all wastewater treatment plants are no longer functional, and 83 per cent of groundwater wells are not operating.
- The dire water and sanitation conditions are also aggravating the state of health in Gaza, with more than 300,000 reported cases of acute respiratory infections and more than 200,000 reported cases of acute watery diarrhea, of whom more than half are children under five, among other outbreaks.
- As outlined in a report from HelpAge, the estimated 111,500 elderly individuals residing in Gaza are particularly vulnerable to hunger, dehydration, illness, injury, and mortality. Even before the onset of the present Israeli aggression, this demographic was contending with the enduring repercussions of conflict and displacement, facing diminished access to crucial health and social services. The report highlights that older individuals bear a disproportionate burden of non-communicable diseases, making them especially susceptible to the adverse effects of damaged health infrastructure and medication shortages resulting from the ongoing crisis.
- As of February 2nd, UNICEF estimates 17,000 unaccompanied or separated children in the Gaza Strip, each embodying a poignant narrative of loss and sorrow. This figure accounts for 1% of the total displaced population, which amounts to 1.7 million people.
- Decomposing remains pose a risk, heightening the threat of a public health crisis.
- Forcibly Displaced Persons (FDPs) are confronting the dual challenges of displacement and harsh winter conditions, including the risk of flooding. The combination of being forcibly displaced and exposed to cold weather poses significant hardships for this vulnerable population.

Health Needs and Risks of non-Communicable Diseases Long term conditions:

- 1,100 Patients in need of kidney dialysis
- More than 485,000 People with mental health disorders prior to the recent aggression. There is an increased risk of multiple psychological effects stemming from the intense bombardment, displacement and food insecurity coupled with severe physical injuries such as the loss of body parts. These challenges are further compounded by the devastating impact of seeing the bodies of the casualties around them and losing family members, homes, and dignity.
- 225,000 People with high blood pressure,45,000 Patients living with cardiovascular disease 71,000 Patients living with diabetes.
- More than 2,000 People diagnosed with cancer each year, including 122 children.
- There is a substantial shortage of essential medication and healthcare services for all who are suffering from NCDs, in addition to the challenging access conditions.

Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health:

- Public health concerns are reportedly mounting across Gaza, disproportionately affecting women. This is due to continued bombardment, the lack of essential food and water supplies, the collapsing health system, and limited access to those in need of urgent assistance. On 16 February, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) emphasized the vulnerabilities facing women: "Everyone in Gaza is hungry, including 50,000 pregnant women, with malnutrition making them more susceptible to disease and less able to recover." Underscoring the immense risks facing pregnant women in Gaza, UNFPA warned: "If the bombs don't kill pregnant women, if disease, hunger and dehydration don't catch up with them, simply giving birth could."
- Approximately 20,000 infants are born into the devastating impacts of the Israeli war on Gaza. There is around 52,000 Pregnant women, and around 183 Births per day.
- Following the Israeli occupation's attacks on healthcare facilities and personnel, the available resources for assisting expectant mothers and their newborns have dramatically decreased, forcing some to give birth in makeshift tents and unsanitary locations.
- Newborn in Gaza are dying due to their mothers' inability to access prenatal and postnatal examinations amidst relentless bombings, forced displacements, and heightened anxiety, resulting in premature deliveries.
- Health workers report a significant increase in the rate of miscarriages, stillbirth and preterm deliveries since the commencement of Israeli attacks on Gaza.
- New reports from Mental Health and Child Protection experts from Save the Children emphasized that the absence of normal protective factors like stable routines and opportunities for play, which typically prevent severe and long-lasting mental health conditions, has been observed in Gaza. The current conditions in Gaza present classic risk factors for enduring mental harm in children. These adverse circumstances have led to a significant deterioration in the mental health of children, surpassing levels seen in previous escalations.[4]
- Symptoms of severe emotional distress and trauma, including fear, anxiety, disordered eating, bedwetting, hyper-vigilance, and sleep disturbances, were reported. Also, behavioral changes such as introversion, separation anxiety, alterations in attachment styles with parents, regression, and aggression were also noted.

[4] https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Trapped-and-Scarred-Final.pdf/

Food insecurity:

- Reports indicate that children are dying due to starvation, especially in northern Gaza. Given the challenging circumstances, determining the precise number of casualties is difficult.
- Catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity are reportedly intensifying across Gaza, with growing reports of families struggling to feed their children and a rising risk of hunger-induced deaths in northern Gaza.
- The Global Nutrition Cluster is reporting a steep rise in malnutrition among children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in the Gaza Strip, as food and safe water become increasingly scarce, and disease proliferates. The situation is especially serious in northern Gaza where 1 in 6 children under the age of 2 (15.6 per cent) who were screened at shelters and health centers in January were found to be acutely malnourished. Of these, almost 3 per cent suffered from severe wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition. This rate of 15.6 per cent of wasting among children under the age of two indicates a decline in a population's nutritional status that is unprecedented globally. According to the report. Prior to 7 October, just 0.8per cent of children under 5 in Gaza were acutely malnourished.
- Between 1 January and 12 February, 51 per cent of missions planned by humanitarian partners to deliver aid and undertake assessments to areas to the north of Wadi Gaza were denied access by the Israeli occupation.
- The entire population in the Gaza Strip (2.2 million people) is at an imminent risk of famine as reported by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in December.

Recorded attacks on Health Facilities and personnel:

- Since October 7th there is an ongoing direct and indirect attacks on health facilities and personnel. The Israeli occupation forces continues to bomb and attack hospitals, clinics, and ambulances. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation forces have killed and abducted several health personal, in addition to blocking the lifesaving medical and humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza.
- The medical teams on the ground are encountering difficulties in transferring critically injured individuals from Nasser Hospital to nearby health facilities, exacerbating the challenges in providing necessary medical care.
- On January 23rd, the Israeli occupation forces bombed Al-Amal Hospital in Khan Younis leading to casualties.
- In total 378 attacks on health facilities and personnel. This is the highest recorded total of attacks on healthcare facilities and their personnel worldwide.
- 458 health personnel martyred and 770 injured by the Israeli occupation in attacks.
- 290 Health workers detained/arrested.
- 155 Health facilities affected including 30 Hospitals damaged, in addition to 126 Ambulances damaged.

The West Bank, including Jerusalem:

- UNICEF's Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa stated that "this year has been the deadliest year on record for children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with conflict-related violence reaching unprecedented levels."
- WHO reports a significant rise in attacks against health care facilities and personnel in West Bank, with over 340 attacks reported since 7 October.

STATE OF PALESTINE
Dr. Mai Alkaila
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- Since 7 October 2023, 447 Palestinians have been martyred by Israeli occupation forces and about 4,700 Palestinians have been injured across the West Bank, and Jerusalem.
- Since 7 October, at least 198 Palestinian households comprising 1,208 people, including 586 children, have been displaced amid settler violence and access restrictions. Another 537 Palestinians, including 238 children, have been displaced since 7 October following the destruction of 82 residential structures during other operations carried out by Israeli forces across the West Bank.
- The Israeli occupation has intensified movement restrictions between cities and rural areas in the West Bank, worsening access to healthcare for the population.

Urgent Needs:

- Immediate cessation of Israeli brutal war against Palestinian civilians.
- Urgent implementation of international humanitarian laws protecting health institutions and civilians.
- Immediate and unconditional entry of humanitarian and health supplies into Gaza.
- Aiding in evacuating the wounded in need for treatment abroad.
- Halt forcible displacement of civilians.
- Urgent support for search and rescue operations.

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